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CALIFORNIA



August 21, 2020

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
c/o California State Auditor
621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sent via electronic transmission

Dear Commissioners:

Congratulations on being selected as the new California Citizens Redistricting Commission. We are a coalition of voting rights, civic engagement, and community organizing groups working together to ensure a redistricting process that engages and reflects the changing face of California. We look forward to working with all of you over the coming years as you do the important work of drawing a new set of legislative maps for the state. We write today to share our initial suggestions regarding the important work you will be doing to establish your working dynamic and relationship with the public that you will serve for the next 10 years.

Many of us were engaged in the 2010 redistricting process, and have worked for the past two years to encourage broad participation in the application and selection process. The following recommendations are based on that work, as well as our ongoing work throughout the state to engage historically underrepresented communities in our democracy:

Learn From the Prior Commission

The 2010 Commission not only brought a wide range of expertise and personal experience to their role as commissioners, but they spent considerable time developing the infrastructure under which they conducted California's first-ever independent redistricting process. They grappled with many of the decisions you are about to make, and they collectively reflected on that process and made recommendations in a written report. That report -- as well as the individual, former commissioners -- are an invaluable resource to you. As you have already heard directly from them, they are available to you and are committed to your success. We hope that you will read their report, consider their recommendations, and take advantage of their expertise by engaging with them directly. Your work will be well-served if you seek their advice, lessons learned, and perspective as you outline your roadmap for the redistricting process.

Invest Time In Team Building

You will need to work very closely together over the coming 10 years; we suggest taking time to do some deliberate team building now, especially with the current reality of Covid-19. From observing the last commission, we believe that you will all be better commissioners individually, and a better commission as a whole, if you spend some time now getting to know each other and your individual work and communication styles. This could take the form of a series of virtual lunches or coffees, and/or formal team building exercises. We hope that you plan this as part of your ongoing activities during your time as a commission. If you get the chance to hold in-person meetings, we suggest that you set aside a specific time around these meetings devoted solely to socializing with each other; meals together are a really good way to get to know each other. You are all interesting people with lots to talk about that doesn't include redistricting -- use your time together to learn about each other.

Share Leadership

The last commission chose a shared leadership model where it rotated chairs throughout the process. In addition to rotating the formal chair and vice chair roles, the 2010 Commission at times had other commissioners chair meetings either because a meeting was in a location known to that commissioner, or because it was on a topic of particular interest to that commissioner. From our point of view as public observers, this rotation had many benefits. First, no one person or political party was seen as "in charge" or controlling the Commission, and it demonstrated equity among the commissioners to the public. Second, it allowed everyone to cycle in and out of the roles of facilitating meetings. This allowed all commissioners to spend most of their time being actively involved in the discussion during meetings without one or two of the commissioners having to consistently focus on leadership tasks.

Engage In Thoughtful, Intentional Hiring

In a previously submitted letter dated June 30, 2020, we urged the State Auditor to withdraw RFP 21-01 for the chief line-drawing consultant because it 1) unnecessarily infringed upon your responsibility to determine the way in which you will conduct the redistricting process, and 2) deprived the public of any opportunity to engage with you as you make those important decisions. The State Auditor did not withdraw the RFP, and additionally posted job descriptions and solicited applications for key staff members for whom you should also have the opportunity to determine the qualifications you seek before the jobs are posted. We therefore strongly recommend that you direct the Auditor's Office to withdraw RFP 21-01 and remove the postings for your Executive Director, General Counsel, and Communications Director. This will give you the opportunity to receive training from redistricting experts so as to better understand and determine the support and qualifications you, as an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, seek from the individuals with whom you will work most closely. It will also ensure the public is engaged, as intended, as you make these important decisions.

Our thanks to all of you for being willing to do this important work for the people of California. Your public service is sincerely appreciated. We look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Mehta Stein
Executive Director
California Common Cause

Carol Moon Goldberg
President
League of Women Voters of CA

Arturo Vargas
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Latino Elected &
Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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Angelica Salas
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Jesse Fraire
Statewide Census Manager
California Native Vote Project

Charles Evans
Supervising Attorney, Impact Advocacy
Asian Americans Advancing
Justice – Los Angeles

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Asian Americans Advancing
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California League of Conservation Voters